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ABSTRACT

This conference paper provides examples of reading comprehension strategies that can be used with students with learning disabilities or reading comprehension difficulties. Before reading, during reading, and after reading strategies are presented. The before reading strategies, which activate the students' background knowledge and attention, include brainstorming, structured questions, a pre-reading plan that assists students in accessing knowledge related to the major concepts presented in a passage, and a strategy called "K-W-L" (What I Know, What I Want to Learn, What I Did Learn), TELLS (study title, examine pages and find what story is about, look for important words, look for hard words, identify setting) Fact or Fiction, and advance organizers. During reading strategies include using reciprocal questioning techniques (ReQuest), self-questioning, visual imagery in which students develop their own pictures for the story, and story mapping. Post-reading strategies that are presented include story retelling, paraphrasing, and using a strategy called "Question-Answer Relationship" to teach students to become aware of the different types of questions asked in stories. (Contains 26 references.) (CR)

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TRIADIC APPROACH TO READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

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How do you define reading? Most definitions have at their core the concept that reading is the act of searching for and understanding the meaning of the written word (Bender, 1996). As anyone who works in a special education setting can tell you, reading comprehension is an area of particular difficulty for many students with learning disabilities (LD). Often these students with reading problems (a) may have difficulty predicting reasonable endings of words, phrases, or sentences,; (b) will read to identify individual letters or words rather than to identify meaning; (c) approach all reading tasks the same way rather than changing according to the type and purpose of reading; (d) do not develop expectations about the main idea of a passage; and (e) become bogged down in decoding passages letter-by-letter or word-by-word rather than using graphic, syntactic, and semantic clues to speed reading and improve comprehension (Cooper & Pretrosky, 1976). These students may also fail to use strategic approaches such as summarizing, monitoring comprehension, and enlisting background information in their reading (Swicegood & Parsons, 1989). It has been suggested that students with LD need instruction designed to increase active thinking and questioning skills.

Reviews of research on the teaching of reading comprehension skills to students with LD have uncovered common themes or generalizations. Among them were (a) there are differences in reading comprehension between students with LD and non-disabled students, (b) teacher-directed instruction during reading increases comprehension, and (c) readers with LD may be taught self-monitoring during reading to improve comprehension. A number of studies have indicated that if these students are given the requisite skills, such as previewing reading materials through readiness strategies, vocabulary strategies, self-monitoring during reading, or strategies to use with text after reading, the reading comprehension ability of students with LD is increased (Tama & Martinez, 1986).

Research has indicated that students with LD can benefit from direct instruction in comprehension strategies, the problem for teachers is to decide what type of intervention to provide. Tierney and Cunningham (1984) provide a model for looking at comprehension strategies. The goal is to have students actively engage in the comprehension process. In their trichotomy, activities occur before, during, or after reading text information.

The first group of strategies activates the students' background knowledge and attention before reading the material. Students are assisted in thinking about how the text is related to other texts in terms of its content, storyline, and structure. Before reading strategies help the reader to set purposes for reading by predicting and asking questions about what they are going to read (Bos & Vaugh, 1994).

The second group guides the student while they are reading the material. These strategies encourage the student to self-question and monitor his/her own comprehension as reading is occurring.

The third group provides interventions that help the students review, question, or synthesize the text after it has been read. These can include discussions that focus on the content of the reading as well as evaluation of the content and the writing style; discussions the encourage students to generate more questions and ideas for further reading and investigation; and retellings that assist students in summarizing and organizing what they have read. (Bos & Vaughn, 1994).

Since a student can have difficulty in any area of the trichotomy, it is important to provide instruction in each type of strategy. In this way we can insure that the student knows how to approach a story, what to look for while reading the story, and how to organize what has been read in a passage. The purpose of this presentation is to provide examples of comprehension strategies that can be used with students with LD or any other

individuals with comprehension difficulties. These strategies were chosen because they are examples of each phase of the trichotomy. This list is not all inclusive and many of the strategies may be placed in more than one area of the triad. Three strategies will be highlighted as examples. The three strategies are (a) an advance organizer technique called *TELLS Fact or Fiction* that is used before a student reads a passage, (b) an schema-based technique called *Story Mapping* that is used while a student reads a passage, and (c) a postreading method of categorizing questions according to the source of the information required for the answer called *Question-Answer Relationships* (QARs). The interventions may be used with both elementary and secondary students.

Before Reading Strategies

The following strategies are meant to activate prior knowledge and are intended to make the student aware of the task components before reading a passage (Bender, 1996)

Brainstorming

This teaching strategy activates relevant prior knowledge, aids in determining the extent of the students' prior knowledge and stimulates interest in the topic. Present a stimulus, ask students to list as many words as they can relate to the stimulus, record associations on board (no judgments), and categorize the associations (Bos & Vaugh, 1994)

Structured Questions

Teacher gives students a set of questions to answer before they read a passage (Rivera & Smith, 1997). The questions can be those found in the teacher's manual. Research has indicated that the use of questioning strategies may be used as a prereading activity with beneficial effects (McCormack & Hill, 1984).

Pre Reading Plan

This is a three-stage strategy (initial association, reflections on association, and reformation of knowledge) that builds on brainstorming. It assists students in accessing knowledge related to the major concepts presented in a passage (Langer, 1981). The teacher is also able to make specific instructional decisions based on what the students know (Christen & Murphy, 1991). Students with *Much knowledge* will have adequate comprehension, students with *Some knowledge* will need instruction in making links between existing and new knowledge and students with *Little knowledge* will need concept instruction before reading commences (Bos & Vaugh, 1994).

K-W-L

This strategy consists of three basic steps representative of the metacognitive steps used by the student as they utilize the strategy with expository text.

1. What I **K**now?
2. What I **W**ant to Learn?
3. What I did **L**earn?

A worksheet is used to record ideas in each step of the strategy (Ogle, 1981).

Advanced Organizers

Any organizational material presented in advance of a learning task (Ausubel & Robinson, 1969). Student is presented an outline of important information prior to reading the selection. The teacher reviews this outline with the student (Bender, 1996).

TELLS, Fact or Fiction

TELLS Fact or Fiction (Idol-Maestas, 1985) is a guided comprehension probe used to orient students to stories prior to reading them. Students are taught to use an acronym intended to remind them of the steps in the process.

T	for study the *title*
E	*examine* the pages and find out what the story is about
L	*look* for important words
L	*look* for hard words
S	identify the *setting*
FACT or **FICTION**	deciding whether the story is *factual* or *fictional* work

The teacher's role is to instruct the students in the following manner. Before reading a story, the students read a step in the probe and are asked questions about the step. For example, in the first step, Title, the children might be asked question such as "What is the title of the story? What does it tell us that the story might be about?" The next step of the probe is read and discussed. The teacher provides assistance only if the students cannot respond independently. Each step of the probe is done in this way. The procedure takes approximately 15 minutes. Following the probe, the students read the story orally and then answer the teacher's comprehension questions orally. As the students become more successful with the probe and are consistently answering with 80% or better accuracy, the teacher may wish to stop guiding the probe, providing students with a chart listing the TELLS Fact or Fiction steps and allowing them to use the probe independently (Sorrell, 1990).

Idol-Maestas (1985) used this technique with 4 elementary students classified LD and 2 secondary students from special education classes. The overall results showed that after training, reading comprehension improved for both the elementary and secondary students as measured by standardized tests and by curriculum-based assessment. The students required the most assistance with the steps involving looking for clues, important words, and hard words.

During Reading Strategies

Many reading comprehension strategies involve regularly planned activities that the student should use during reading a passage. A few examples are ReQuest, Self-Questioning, RIDER, and Story Mapping.

ReQuest

This is a reciprocal questioning technique that assists students in formulating questions about what they read (Manzo, 1969). The procedure builds on the principles of modeling and feedback to help students to develop appropriate questions. The steps are (a) teacher and the student read the passage silently, (b) the student questions the teacher, (c) teacher questions student, (d) continue with next section of text, (e) ask predictive questions, and (f) silently read to end of passage and discuss predictions.

Self-Questioning

Many techniques have been developed to teach students to ask themselves questions as they read. At the University of Kansas Institute for Learning Disabilities a self-questioning strategy based on the five *wh* questions has been developed (Clark et al, 1984). The student reads a passage and asks the five *wh* questions (who, what, when, where, and why) as he/she reads. (Bender, 1996).

RIDER

In this strategy, students are taught to use visual imagery. They develop their own pictures for the story. RIDER stands for the first letters of each step.

R Read the first sentence
I Try to make an image in your mind
D Describe your image
E Evaluate its completeness
R Repeat steps as you read next passage (Clark et al, 1984).

Story Mapping

Story mapping has been called a schema-building technique in which schemata may be thought of as "the fundamental elements upon which all information processing depends (Rumelhart, 1980, p. 33). It is based on what is called a schema-theoretic view of reading comprehension (Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, & Goetz, 1977) that emphasizes increasing the correspondence between the reader's prior knowledge structures (schema) and the text. The story mapping technique instructs the reader about the interrelated parts of a story, which provides a framework that draws the reader's attention to the common elements among stories such as the setting , characters, goals, and problems, outcome, and conclusion (Idol, 1987). These common elements are called story grammars (Singer & Donlan, 1983). Story mapping is a visual representation of story grammars. The six story elements in the map are (Rivera & Smith, 1997):

Setting:	Introduction of main characters, time, place.
Beginning:	Event that triggers the story.
Reaction:	Response of main characters, what they do-goal?
Attempt:	What efforts do the characters make to attain goal?
Outcome:	Results of attempt to reach goal.
Ending:	Consequences of the main characters' action and final response.

The version of story mapping described in this presentation was developed by Idol (1987) and was used in two studies. In the first (Idol & Croll, 1987), 5 elementary students with LD were trained to use story mapping procedures. All 5 students showed improved comprehension on daily reading lessons. Four of the five were able to maintain this improved comprehension when no longer using story mapping.

In the second study (Idol, 1987), a heterogeneous third and fourth grade class that included 5 students with LD was taught to use a story mapping strategy. The major findings of this study were that daily comprehension improved as a result of this training, all 5 student with LD showed similar improvement, and the progress of the normally

achieving students was not hindered by the presence of low achievers in the group instruction.

For teaching this strategy to students, a teacher presentation style called a model-lead-test paradigm (Carnine & Silbert, 1979) is used. The teacher (a) models the correct response, (b) responds with the student [leads], and (c) has students respond independently (tests).

Model Phase. The teacher shows the student an overhead transparency of a story map. The use of the story map is modeled by reading the story aloud, stopping at points where information pertaining to one of the story components is presented (Bos & Vaughn, 1994). After the students have read the story, they complete the story map, with the teacher calling on students for responses. All students fill in their own copies by copying the responses as the teacher fills them in on the overhead. If there is implicit information in the story, the teacher will model how to generate the inference. The students then answer comprehension questions. A set of generic questions can be developed based on the elements of story grammar such as the characters, the setting, problems, goals, and outcome of the story (Idol, 1987; Idol & Croll, 1987).

Lead Phase. The teacher no longer models the use of the story map and the students independently fill in the maps as they read. After reading the story and completing their maps, the students return to group instruction. The teacher calls on students to identify the story map contents. The responses are recorded on the overhead. The students make any needed changes in their own maps, then answer the comprehension questions.

Test Phase. The students read the stories and use the story maps as they read. They are no longer called upon as a group to respond to the story map components. The

students will answer questions such as: Who were the characters? Where did the story take place? What was the main character trying to accomplish? (Sorrell, 1990).

Maintenance Phase. The ultimate goal is to achieve maintenance. Once the group averages 80% correct answers to the comprehension questions for 2 consecutive day, the students can read the story silently, answer the questions, and not use the story maps.

After Reading Strategies

The most common type of comprehension strategy involves postreading activities (Bender, 1996). End of chapter , fill-in-the-blank, and end of the book questions are common features of basal readers. The following strategies are designed to be used after the student has read a passage.

Story Retelling: SPOT

Having students retell a story has typically been used to assess comprehension, but this technique also improves the recall of major story points (Bender, 1996). Bos (1987) used cognitive behavior modification principles to teach a story-retelling strategy called SPOT. The student is encouraged to "SPOT the Story" as a cue for remembering the different parts of the story:

Setting	Who, What, When, Where
Problem	What is the problem to be solved?
Order of Action	What happened to solve the problem? (correct/logical order)
Tail End	What happened in the end?

Paraphrasing: RAP

Another strategy developed at the Kansas University Institute of Research in Learning Disabilities (Schumaker, Denton, and Deshler, 1984), this technique is designed to help students recall the main idea and specific facts of materials they have read. The

student completes three activities for every paragraph or other appropriate unit of text that they read. The student learns to:

1. **R**ead a paragraph
2. **A**sk yourself, "What were the main ideas and details in this paragraph?"
3. **P**ut the main idea and details in your own words.

Question-Answer Relationship (QAR)

The final comprehension strategy discussed in the triad is called the Question Answer Relationship (QAR). This strategy has been shown to have positive results (Ezel, 1992; Simmonds, 1992). It teaches students to become aware of the different types of questions asked in stories. Questions can be categorized according to the source of the information required for the answer (Raphael, 1982). Raphael (1986) describes four types of QARs:

1. *Right There:* The answer is in the story. These questions are usually literal and detail oriented. The words used in creating the question and words used for the answer are in the same sentence (textually explicit).
2. *Think and Search:* The answer is also in the text, but the reader must look in several places in the story. Words used to create the question and those used for the answer would not be in the same sentence (textually implicit)
3. *Author and You:* The student's prior knowledge is needed. Inferences and conclusions are made. Information must come from the reader, but in connection with information presented by the author.
4. *On Your Own:* Cannot be answered from the text; must come from the learner's experience. Questions asked prior to reading and extensions following reading are of this type (scriptually implicit).

The four QARs should be taught as two types. The first two are labeled "In the Book" and the last two are called "In My Head." The two types should be taught separately. The students must learn to distinguish between the two major categories and then between the subcategories. When students know the differences between the two major categories of QARs, then teach the differences between the subcategories. The "In the Book " subcategories should be taught first. The primary difference between the "In

My Head" subcategories is "whether or not the reader needs to read the text for the questions to make sense" (Raphael, 1986, p. 519).

In order to teach students to use this strategy, one uses a technique similar to that described for teaching story mapping (Sorrell, 1990). The teacher models the four types of QARs. A chart or transparency can be prepared for this purpose. Passages are provided that illustrate the various QARs. Raphael (1982) states that when teaching QARs one should (a) give immediate feedback, (b) progress from shorter to longer texts, (c) build independence by guiding students from group to independent activities, and (d) provide transition from recognizing an answer to creating a response from more than one source of information. This strategy has been modified for use in math to help teach students read, answer questions, and learn from mathematics texts (McIntosh & Draper, 1995).

Conclusion

This presentation has provided comprehension strategies that conform to Tierney and Cunningham's (1984) model of comprehension strategies. Three strategies were highlighted. The TELLS Fact or Fiction is used before the student reads the text in order to activate existing background knowledge. Story mapping can guide students while they read the text. Finally, the QAR strategy can be used after the student has read the material and aids in reviewing, questioning, synthesizing the material.

All three of these strategies have been shown to improve poor readers' comprehension skills. A combination of two or perhaps all three techniques might provide an effective approach to teaching comprehension skills (Sorrell, 1990). A caution should be noted, however. It should not be presumed that once a teacher-guided procedure has improved a poor reader's comprehension, the improvement will be maintained after the

instruction is removed (Idol-Maestas, 1985). Rather, teachers should systematically plan, teach, and test for these effects (Idol & Croll, 1987).

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